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"A Strategy of Reconciliation"

Core Course IV Essay

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The end of the Cold War has presented the United States with new opportunities and challenges in South Asia. In order to effectively deal with this strategically important area, however, it is vital that we understand the context of the relationship. The beginning of the Soviet - U S rivalry following World War II, the independence of India, and the birth of Pakistan occurred simultaneously. It is no coincidence then, that the history of U S - Indian - Pakistani relations can be seen largely as a byproduct of Soviet containment. Despite the growth of U S influence in the region both economically and politically in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union, we lack a clearly defined post-Cold War strategic policy for the region and the mechanisms needed to resolve long standing issues. The dominant issues include the five decade old conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, continued U S disagreement with India over the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, potential sources of regional instability, and continued arms sales from China to Pakistan.

This paper first addresses the major issues in the context of regional trends, perceived interests, threats, and goals of India, Pakistan, and the U S. Secondly, it analyzes the means available to the U S to achieve its objectives. Finally, policy recommendations are presented.

India's perceptions of U S policy and intentions in the region are characterized by suspicion and mistrust. The roots of these perceptions are the Cold War relationships between the U S and Pakistan, and India and the Soviet Union. India's refusal to accept the NPT can be viewed in this light as well. India believes that the U S continues to unfairly pressure/coerce India to accept a fundamentally inequitable NPT that legitimizes status quo nuclear states and demands that threshold states such as India give up nuclear aspirations without alternative security guarantees. U S political and economic motives are also suspect. India fears that the U S will pursue an economic agenda that precludes India from becoming too successful and powerful -- thereby denying her rightful status as a "great power." On the other hand, India realistically sees that improved relations with the world's sole remaining superpower would be beneficial. Few Indians believe that Russia will re-emerge in the foreseeable future as a reliable and powerful sponsor. With regard to her relations with Pakistan, India expects that the dispute over Kashmir will not be resolved until the international community recognizes and supports what India considers its legal and historical

claim India also warily pursues better relations with China and realizes that China's economic and military power are increasing but her intentions remain ambiguous

Domestically, democratization and liberal economic reform will continue, but in harmony with what India considers its superior culture and stable social structure India does not feel that the U S gives it proper credit for being the largest and most stable democracy in the region, with an elected government and civilian control of the military

Pakistan will continue to define its national security based upon its relationship with India India and Pakistan will continue to have political and military differences on the question of territorial control of Kashmir In this regard, nuclear weapons are seen as vital to neutralizing the military advantage held by India Democratic institutions will most likely slowly evolve toward maturity but the military will continue to play a key role in defining the national security issues for the state Ethno-religious unrest has recently become a major domestic problem for Pakistan The disputed F-16 sale and other arms purchases held hostage by the Pressler Amendment restrictions continue to exacerbate the growing feeling that the U S has turned its back on its long time ally now that the Cold War is over Unfortunately, the implications of this view reinforce what many Indian observers suspect about U S intentions in South Asia They believe that the U S is an unreliable ally who seeks to exploit the region solely for U S political and economic advantage

NATIONAL INTERESTS

The U S has an increasingly wide spectrum of interests in South Asia in the post Cold War era These include regional stability, WMD non-proliferation, economic growth, expansion of democracy, overpopulation, environmental protection, and value projection Pakistan's national interests are focussed on preservation of the integrity and sovereignty of the state of Pakistan To this end, subordinate interests include maintaining military balance (albeit asymmetrical) with India with nuclear weapons, cultivating alliances with other nations, and promoting international recognition of Pakistan as an important Muslim state and counterbalance to Iran It is hoped that continuing political and economic reforms will allow Pakistan to be accepted as a "normal" state Internal interests include political stability and resolution of disputes among different factions, including the Sind province separatists

India's interests are based upon the larger imperative to preserve its integrity and

sovereignty and to be treated by the U S as a "great power" India seeks resolution of the Kashmir dispute in its favor to include international recognition of India's legitimate claim to the area India wants to resolve nuclear/NPT issues on the basis of equality and global disarmament vice non-proliferation Internally, India strives for continued economic growth, increased access to other country's markets, and access to and free flow of Persian Gulf oil at market prices India also wants to maintain good relations with the Arab/Islamic world (including Iran) for economic, domestic political, and security reasons

THREATS

The global and regional environment during the next ten years will pose many challenges or threats to both U S and South Asian national interests The primary interest of all countries in the region is security and stability Since 1947 India and Pakistan have been at war three times, India has had two disputes with China, and India has been involved in an ethnic dispute in Sri Lanka When we focus on the continued destabilizing conflict over the Kashmir area that has been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan since 1948, this has heightened the possible proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by both India and Pakistan While both nations have no declared nuclear weapons capability, their refusal to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) along with efforts to develop or acquire nuclear weapons technology and delivery systems keeps the region at risk India demonstrated its nuclear capability in 1974 by conducting its one and only nuclear test and since that time has been developing both short and medium range ballistic missiles Pakistan has not demonstrated a nuclear weapons capability, but continues to try to procure nuclear weapons technology such as specialized magnets and M-11 missiles from China and F-16's from the United States

Another threat to stability in the region could come from both internal and external disputes among different ethnic/religious groups The dispute in Kashmir and the Tamil rebel movement in Sri Lanka have already been mentioned Islamic fundamentalism Sikh's in Punjab, and the export of instability through terrorism from Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics are also threats to the region

The final threat in the region is illicit drug trade Drug production and use, trans-shipment, and illegal financial activities have strained an already weak social system and led

to drug financed terrorism. This issue as well as the ones mentioned above have had an adverse impact on the United States' goals of promotion of democracy, continued economic growth, and value projection.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The United States goals and objectives for the South Asian region are presented in prioritized order.

The over-arching objective of the U.S. should be to promote regional stability and security. This can be accomplished by reducing tensions and resolving conflicts through multi- and bilateral discussions and agreements. The nuclear capabilities of India, Pakistan, and China along with the long-standing border disputes, ethnic and religious conflicts, and hegemonic aspirations of these countries requires that this be our top priority.

Continued economic reform and growth in the region is of paramount importance. One of the most populated regions of the world, throughout the region trade barriers are falling and the move toward market-oriented economies continues. South Asia is certainly a major emerging market for the United States and the world and the resulting stronger and more open markets will also facilitate democratic and social growth in the region.

Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and halting the continued development of delivery systems is the next priority. This can be accomplished through international agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in conjunction with arms reduction agreements which India supports. Multi- and bilateral discussions and agreements will also be required to strengthen or replace the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to foster better relations among the countries of the region.

Freedom of navigation and open sea lanes of communication are also important to the nations of South Asia. Oil flowing out of the Middle East to South Asia, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan must transit the Indian Ocean. Neither regional instability nor the rise of a regional hegemon must be allowed to disrupt the flow of oil.

The final U.S. goal is to continue to promote democracy and value projection throughout the region. While India has been a democratic nation and Pakistan has fluctuated

between democracy and military rule since 1947, there are still areas of civil liberties and human rights that these countries and their neighbors can improve

MEANS

Political, economic, and military instruments of national power can play key roles in achieving U S goals and objectives in South Asia. Diplomatic and military contacts can be used to build Indian and Pakistani confidence and encourage their participation in international efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States and Russia are setting the example with arms reduction agreements. India and Pakistan have been reluctant to sign up to the NPT. Pakistan sees its nuclear capability tied to Indian possession of nuclear arms, while India on the other hand, sees its nuclear weapons program in a global perspective. Therefore, China's nuclear capability plays into India calculations about nuclear weapons.

Pakistani and Indian participation in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Missile Technology Control Regime would limit the impact of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent. This will not be an easy sell, but the international community with U S leadership should attempt to accomplish this important step. We have seen other nations including Argentina and Brazil back away from the brink of nuclear arming. These countries should participate in the international dialogue with India and Pakistan to demonstrate that national security can be achieved without nuclear weapons. The nuclear question in South Asia takes on a sense of urgency because the Kashmir dispute remains the biggest threat to stability in the region. The U S can encourage a negotiated solution to the Kashmir issue. Continued bilateral dialogue at all levels is the key. The United States should use its influence to encourage this dialogue.

The United States should use military-to-military contacts to break down the walls of mistrust that exist between the Pakistani and Indians. The U S should use foreign military sales and military cooperation in a positive and not a punitive fashion. We should sever the linkage between sale of modern conventional weapons and nuclear behavior. Instead, we should view conventional weapons as they meet the legitimate security interests of the

nations of South Asia. Finally, the continued development of emerging markets in South Asia can be of benefit to both India and Pakistan. The U.S. should continue development assistance to South Asia and also encourage private investments.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall policy of the United States in South Asia should be formulated within the context of the region. To do this, it is important to look at the goals and objectives of the major players in the region, Pakistan and India. Pakistan's major interest is the maintenance of its national integrity and sovereignty. It is willing to use nuclear weapons to deter India and counter the superior military advantage enjoyed by India. By the same token, Pakistan seems to be willing to make it difficult for India to maintain control in Kashmir. Covert support for insurgents in Kashmir allows the Pakistani government to maintain a no-compromise public image at home. India defines its security concerns more broadly than Pakistan. Consequently, questions about its nuclear weapons include considerations of China's capability. Continued economic growth, increased standards of living, and regional and international status are key goals for India. The diverse make up of the Indian society makes Kashmir an important political issue. It is important for India not to give the impression that it is giving up part of its territory to Pakistan. This is so important that the two countries engaged in a mini-war on a 17,000 foot high glacier. Each country wanted to prevent the other from laying claim to any additional part of the Kashmir.

Any U.S. policy should ensure regional stability through efforts to resolve the long-standing dispute over Kashmir and reduce the possibility of the use or the proliferation of nuclear weapons. These two issues are linked because the Kashmir dispute represents the potential flash point that could lead to direct military confrontation between the two countries. India presently has approximately 500,000 troops deployed to the Kashmir. "Total" war between the two countries can conceivably escalate to nuclear exchange.

The present U.S. National Security Strategy rests on three central goals. We seek to sustain our security, promote economic revitalization, and to promote democracy abroad. While South Asia does not present a direct security threat to the U.S., it certainly can be an opportunity for possible emerging economic markets. This opportunity will develop in an environment of stability. Influencing internal events in India and Pakistan will be very

difficult for an outside agent, since national interests drive both countries. However, resolution of the Kashmir question would remove the major political challenge to a lessening of Indo-Pakistani tensions and remove the primary flashpoint to possible nuclear confrontation.

We recommend active U.S. leadership to solve the Kashmir dispute. This should receive our highest diplomatic attention in the region. The U.S. demonstrated the importance of international leadership in the Middle East. We used our influence to get the principles to the negotiating table. This same level of involvement is necessary to get Pakistan and India to the table. A diplomatic solution to the Kashmir dispute can yield benefits for nuclear non-proliferation in the area, add stability to the region, and enhance U.S. influence. This can also set the stage for economic opportunities for U.S. business and assist growth for the nations in the region. This will require the investment of development and economic assistance. We can use our role in international organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to seek assistance in the economic development of the region.

The end result of these initiatives will be a more stable regional environment. This could provide the incentives for the regional actors to work together to forge a truly effective regional cooperative mechanism for security, economic cooperation, and political cohesion. This new regional cooperation would also facilitate solutions to transnational issues including drugs, population growth, immigration, and the environment.